

Oral Questions

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I was referring to a replacement for the Argus and possibly, also, for the Tracker when I referred to the studies which have been taking place. We will be entering the contract definition phase in the near future. I expect to make a recommendation to cabinet within the next two or three weeks.

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EDUCATION**SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ASSIST PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Secretary of State. In view of the fact the government of British Columbia has declined to apply for assistance on behalf of private or independent schools under the federal official second language instruction program, can the minister tell us what steps, if any, are being contemplated to make financial aid available to these schools on the same basis as the public school system?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member probably knows, there has been an indication of a change in policy with respect to independent schools. I received a letter from the education minister of British Columbia, Mrs. Dailly, on September 29 indicating a change in position, and as a result of that letter my officials are in British Columbia today discussing possible changes arising from that change in policy.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**VENUE OF NEXT LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE**

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister in his capacity as Secretary of State for External Affairs. In light of the political unrest in Chile, would the hon. gentleman inform the House whether it is still the intention to hold the next Law of the Sea conference in Santiago, Chile, next spring as scheduled?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I would doubt that the conference would be held there, but no decision has yet been made.

Mr. Crouse: In view of the importance to Canada of the outcome of this conference, and since bilingual translation facilities are available in Canada, would the minister consider extending an invitation to the nations concerned to hold this conference in Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sharp: I think that is a very useful suggestion. I can assure the hon. member that there will be many competitors.

[Mr. Nowlan.]

PUBLIC SERVICE**PAY INCREASES FOR CLERICAL EMPLOYEES—GOVERNMENT POLICY**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the President of Treasury Board why, when the cost of living is rising this year at a rate of more than 8 per cent, his officials in Treasury Board were not willing to offer the clerical employees of the federal civil service an increase of more than 3 per cent this year, 3 per cent next year and 2 per cent in the third year?

Mr. Howard: Cheap, that's why.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): I think the hon. gentleman is asking me to comment on negotiations which are still in progress, and this has not been the policy.

Mr. Orlikow: If the minister does not feel he can comment at this point, possibly he could comment, when the process is completed, on the very generous increases given to senior civil servants of between \$4,000 and \$10,000 a year, though only 3 per cent is to be given to the clerical civil servants.

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Would the minister advise the House whether he is now prepared to withdraw the offer made to public servants in the clerical group and to make a new offer indicating that the government recognizes the cost of living is rising for these public servants?

Mr. Drury: When the application for binding arbitration was made, the government appointed a mediator under whose auspices some six meetings have since taken place, leading to modifications of the wage demand on the part of the employees and a counter offer by the government.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**DESIGNATED AREAS—DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW POLICY**

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

On September 7 last, the hon. member for Bellechasse asked whether the policy concerning designated areas or special areas would apply in the future. The minister replied that he was discussing with the provinces a new policy to assist the slow growth areas. Can he say when he will announce that new policy and will it be before this coming winter?

[English]

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure it will be done before the winter. The draft of the joint development agreement with not only Quebec but all the provinces but one is virtually ready for submission to my